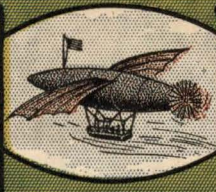


FRANK READE



WEEKLY MAGAZINE,

Containing Stories of Adventures on Land, Sea & in the Air.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2 50 per year Application made for Second-Class Entry at N Y Post-Office

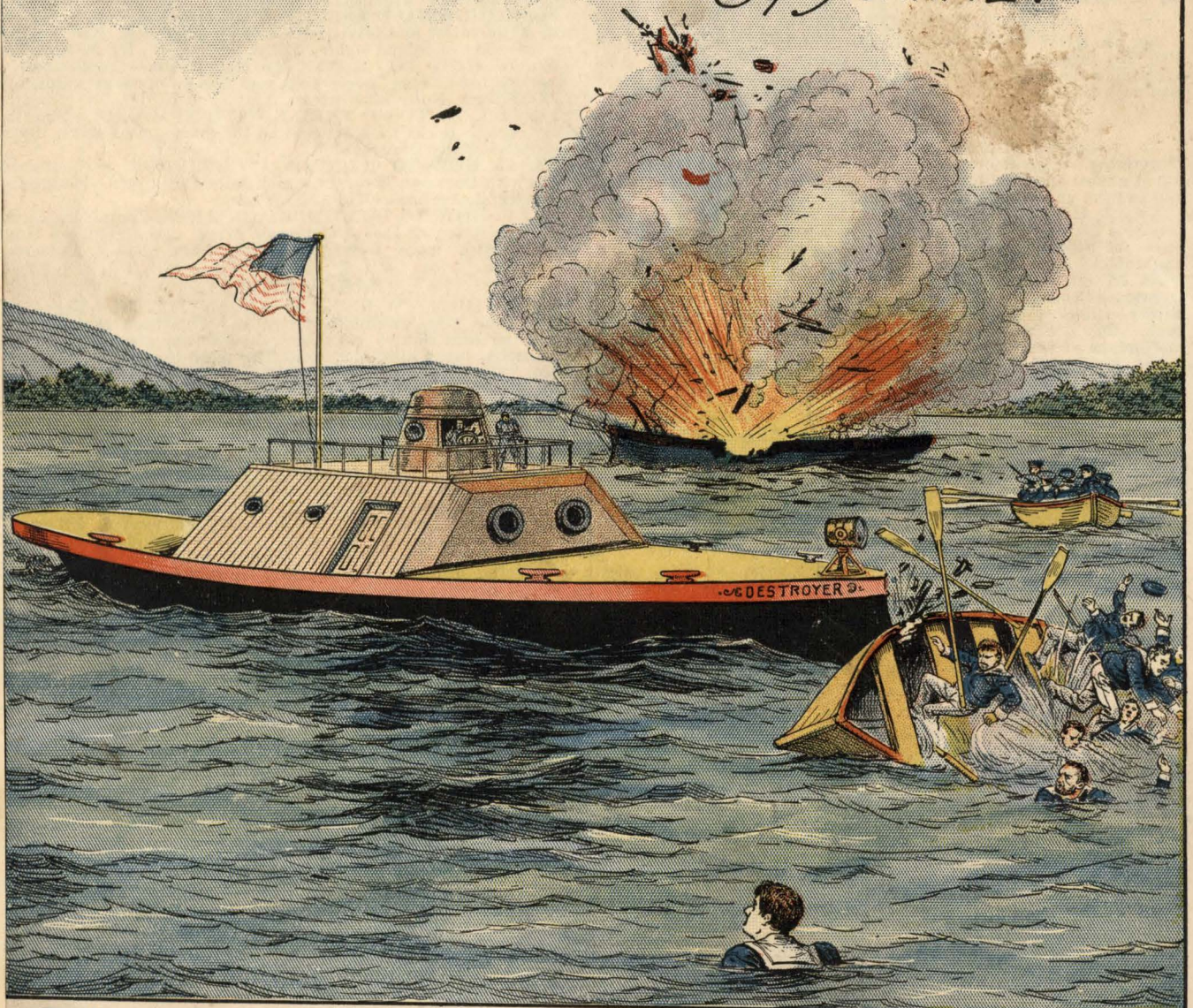
No. 11.

NEW YORK, JANUARY 9, 1903.

Price 5 Cents.

FRANK READE, JR., AND HIS TORPEDO BOAT: OR, AT WAR WITH THE BRAZILIAN REBELS.

By "NONAME."



The keen prow of the torpedo boat struck the row-boat. Crash! went the wood. It was crushed in like an eggshell. The crew was flung in the sea. Here they were utterly at Frank's mercy.

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CHAPTER I.

SAVED BY A BOMBSHELL.

Readestown was a very handsome little city located at the junction of two rivers that emptied into the ocean.

It was chiefly celebrated as the residence of a noted inventor of submarine boats, flying machines and overland engines, named Frank Reade, Jr., after whose father the place had been named.

Frank lived in a magnificent dwelling, near which stood the great workshops, foundries and machine buildings in which his world-famous contrivances were produced.

About eleven o'clock on a dark, gloomy night in October, the inhabitants of the city were startled by hearing a terrible explosion coming from the direction of the inventor's place.

So heavy was the discharge that it shook strong buildings, the earth trembled and some people were thrown down.

A scene of intense excitement ensued.

People rushed from all directions toward the inventor's shop, pale and terrified, wondering what had happened, and asking each other excitedly what had transpired.

Following the explosion a lurid gleam had gushed out, not unlike an appalling discharge of sheet lightning.

Before the blinding light vanished there came a sound of whistling and screaming up in the air, much as if a hundred steam whistles had been given a sudden blast.

In a moment more intense gloom and a deathly silence ensued, and the startled citizens waited suspensefully, as if in expectation of something dreadful occurring.

For a few moments this deep silence lasted.

Then one of the gates was flung open.

Within the entrance stood Frank.

He was a fashionably attired young man.

Rather tall and slender, he possessed an athletic figure, and prominent features that lent him a distinguished appearance.

He stood regarding the crowd in silence a moment.

Then he was assailed with numerous questions.

"What has happened?"

"Did you cause the explosion?"

"Has any one been killed?"

"Great heavens! what a shock!"

"It must have been a powder magazine."

"Are the buildings blown up, Mr. Reade?"

These and innumerable other remarks were made.

The inventor finally held up his hand to enjoin silence, and a hush fell upon the multitude.

"Gentlemen, it was only a harmless accident!" he exclaimed. "My two old friends, Barney and Pomp, were loading the magazine of my new submarine torpedo boat with a number of these bombs," here he held up a metal hand grenade the size of a base ball, so all could see it, and then he continued: "While carrying several of them from my laboratory in the ammunition room in the shop, out to the Destroyer, as my new boat is named, Pomp let one of the grenades fall, and it rolled to the end of the yard down a steep terrace. There it struck a stone and burst."

"Do you mean to say that little thing made all the noise and glare of light we just heard and saw?" demanded one of the bystanders, incredulously.

"Why, certainly," Frank replied.

"How could it?"

"Because it is charged with a compound I have recently invented which has a greater expansive force than dynamite," explained Frank, explanatorily. "I have been experimenting with this material, and have loaded a number of torpedoes with it to be used in my new electric air-gun aboard the boat."

"I don't believe that a little thing like that did it," said the man in skeptical tones. "It isn't possible."

"Do you want me to prove what I say?" asked Frank, in nettled tones.

"Yes. Yes. Yes!" resounded on all sides.

"Then stand back, all of you, for here's my opportunity now of not only showing you the power of this shell, but also of saving some of you from being gored to death!"

He pointed up the street at a wild steer.

The beast had broken loose from one of the railroad cattle pens, and was then charging on the crowd.

Along it came, its muzzle bent to the ground, saliva dripping from its jaws, and bellow after bellow hoarsely pealing from its throat.

A wild shout of alarm arose from the crowd, for the electric lights with which the street was furnished plainly showed them the monster that was sweeping toward them.

It was very evident that before many of them could get out of the way, the furious beast would reach some, for there was a tremendous crowd choking up the street.

"Room for me!" shouted Frank.

He rushed swiftly through the retreating crowd.

In a moment he stood alone facing the steer.

The animal arrived within stone's throw of him.

Frank then hurled the bomb with unerring aim, and it struck the ground violently in front of the creature.

Boom! roared the explosion.

There was a dazzling glare and a deafening report.

A cloud flew up in the air composed of dirt and stone that was ripped from the roadbed, and among it the tor fragments of the wild steer's body.

A deep silence ensued.

Then such a tremendous cheer arose that Frank's nerve tingled.

"Hurrah for Frank Reade, Jr.! Hip-hip!" yelled a man.

"Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" screamed the rest.

The inventor had probably saved several lives, and the knew it.

"Gentlemen, are you satisfied that I have not exaggerated the force of these bombs?" asked Frank, when he could make his voice heard.

"Yes, yes," came the reply.

"Then never doubt me again."

And so saying Frank left the cheering, enthusiastic crowd, and passing through the gate he closed and locked it. Shortly afterward the crowd dispersed.

Frank strode through several spacious yards inclosed by high brick walls, and headed toward a large deep basin walled in, from which a canal flowed out to one of the rivers.

A gate in the wall opened, and by the mellow electric lights that illuminated the grounds Frank observed a man come running out toward him.

He was a raw-boned Irishman named Barney O'Shea who had accompanied Frank on most of the voyages he made in his wonderful inventions.

He was a red-headed Celt, with a good-natured face, full of life, pluck and ructions as could be, and was noted as a lively performer on the violin.

"Be heavens, he's a-loive!" he gasped, disappointedly, when his twinkling gray eyes fell upon Frank, and he came to a pause.

"Are you sorry for it, Barney?" laughed the inventor, good-naturedly.

"I'm not," confessed Barney, with a broad grin, "but a bedad, it's sure I wuz that yer'd blowed yersilf ter glory with ther bomb ye carried in yer hand. Imagine me disappintmint ter foind ye a-loive."

"Excuse me for not giving you a chance to attend n funeral," laughed Frank. "I'm sorry I'm alive, Barney, but I can't help it."

"Faith, it's an illegant wake we could have over yoe Masther Frank, me jewel, but niver moind—betther luck next toime."

"Hark! What's that yelling?"

"Shure, it do be soundin' a dale loike Pomp, ther nagur."

And a roar of laughter escaped Barney.

"Frank shot a quick, apprehensive glance at him.

"Have you been playing your practical jokes upon him?" asked.

"Sorra a bit," grinned Barney. "Faith, him an' me wuz roonin' pasht ther canal basin ter see what waz afther astin', whin all av a suddint me fut shlipped from undher e, an' tuck ther coon in ther shins. An' before I could get her grip av me fingers in his wool ther black-an'-tan gorilla int head forst inter ther wather, bad cess to him, an' left e ter go on alone."

"Help! Help!" yelled Pomp's voice at this juncture. Oh, golly! I'se a dead niggah! Fo' de Lawd's sake, some-uddy hist me out ob heah, or I'se gwine ter git drowned b' shuah!"

"Get him out, Barney, you rogue. You tripped him on purpose!" cried Frank. "I can see by your actions you're guilty."

The good-natured Irishman chuckled and went to Pomp's aid.

The coon was a comical-looking little fellow as black as ink, and was swimming in the cold water of the big basin. Being unable to climb up the steep brick walls, he was keeping himself afloat by swimming, and yelling lustily for help.

Barney shouted to him to grasp his hand, and stooping over the edge he reached down for the coon.

Pomp grabbed the Irishman's big fist with significant fervor.

Instead of trying to get out, however, he pulled upon it with all his might, and the next instant the mischievous Barney was caught in his own trap, for he toppled head first into the water with him.

"Murther!" he yelled, frantically. "I'm over me head!" "Yah! yah! yah! Done catch yo' dat time, honey!" chuckled Pomp.

And Frank had to haul them both out with a rope.

"Come on board of the Destroyer, boys," laughed Frank. "We've got work to do with the submarine boat to-night, and besides that, you both need a change of clothing."

The boat floated in the big basin.

She was a large, peculiar-looking craft, and as they started to cross the gang plank to board her, a most singular event occurred, that almost cost their lives.

CHAPTER II.

BLOWING UP THE ROCKS.

The deck of the Destroyer was almost flush with the surface of the water, and was furnished with a square deck

house on top of which stood a cupola used as a wheel-house.

The vessel was made entirely of tough steel plates two inches in thickness, her length being 300 feet, her beam 40 feet, and her draught twenty.

As Frank and his comrades boarded her, there suddenly sounded a fearful crackling about the boat, and myriads of blue fire balls began to dart all over her.

She was electrified.

The current was so strong that Barney and Pomp were shocked in consequence of their shoes being wet, while the soles of Frank's foot gear began to smoke and burn.

"Run for your lives!" shouted the young inventor.

This warning was scarcely necessary.

Barney and Pomp were yelling with misery.

"Howly mother!" howled the former; "I'm roastin'!"

"Oh! ouch!" screamed the coon, dancing up and down.

"Dar's pins an' needles gwine froo dis niggah like de deuce!"

They rushed for the gangplank.

But all of them were severely shocked ere they reached it.

From the hull the current was "grounding" in the water so heavily that scores of fish were killed and floated on the surface.

By the time Frank and his friends reached the ground their shoes were destroyed, but they no longer felt the current.

"What could have happened to fill her with the current?" asked Frank, wonderingly, as he stood watching the glittering sparks flying off the boat's hull.

"Begorra, now I come to think av it," said Barney, scratching his red head reflectively, "ther nagur an' I wuz chargin' ther electhric battheries afore we heered ther bomb busht beyant in ther shtrate. An' I'm afther thinkin' ther current must hev broke loose from ther loikes av thim an' got inter ther hull av ther boat."

"Fo' suah," assented Pomp, decisively. "Dat mus' be de way, sah."

"Unless I can get aboard and stop the escape of that current, the heat from it will melt the steel hull like wax."

"Faix, it's as much as your loife is worth to vinture in now."

"Golly, don' yo' go fo' ter do it, Marse Frank."

"Oh, I've got to. Besides, I won't run much risk if I insulate my body in a rubber suit," said the inventor, quickly. "While I'm gone haul her over to the side of the basin by the hawser."

Leaving his friends pulling the rope, Frank rushed away into one of the big brick buildings.

When he emerged he was clad in a rubber diving suit

which covered his head, body and extremities, while over the face there was a glass visor almost impervious to electricity.

The Destroyer was getting very hot when he boarded her, but he unhesitatingly crossed the deck to the door at the port side.

Flinging it open, he ran into a beautifully appointed cabin in which there were a number of bunks.

A flight of stairs led from this room up to the cupola, while under them a spiral staircase descended into the hold.

The boat was furnished with incandescent lamps which now glowed brilliantly, lighting up the interior.

Frank hastened down below.

He landed in the gun room.

Here a huge pneumatic gun stood.

Its muzzle projected through a tubular opening in the bow, which was furnished with a spring trap that closed watertight when the piece was withdrawn.

Above it was a bull's-eye to see ahead.

This room was filled with torpedoes of one hundred times the explosive force possessed by the hand grenades.

Should the electricity touch them or any of the other loaded small arms and ammunition in the magazine, the vessel would have been blown into fragments.

Frank did not pause here.

He dashed through a door into the next room.

This apartment contained the machinery for working the screw, besides the electric lighting plant, a dynamo, motors, water pumps, air pumps, and innumerable cells of battery.

It was here the trouble lay.

The chemicals in the accumulator jars had started the current, and a disconnected wire was pouring the electricity into the vessel's hull as fast as it was generated.

Frank saw at a glance where the trouble lay.

He at once seized the live wire with his rubber-gloved hand and secured it to the binding-post where it belonged.

Instantly the water outside drained the vessel's hull of all the electricity that had charged it.

The current swept into the machinery.

It began to work like a clock and revolve the screw.

Up-stairs rushed the young inventor to the turret.

The room was furnished with a steering wheel, a compass, various electrical instruments, and a number of levers, by means of which all parts of the Destroyer were controlled.

Seizing one of these levers, Frank reversed it.

That threw the current from the machinery, and it stopped.

Then the danger was over.

Barney and Pomp came aboard rather gingerly.

"Have ye it?" queried the Celt.

"She's all right!" replied Frank, cheerily.

"Didn' I tole yo' he done do it?" demanded Pomp.

"Cast off those hawsers!" shouted Frank.

"Is it to say we is goin'?"

"Yes; I want to see how she operates."

"Come here, naygur, an' lind me ther loan av yer he
Away hastened the two to the hawsers, and casting t
off, the boat was set adrift.

Frank quickly put her machinery in motion.

She turned around, ran down the channel, and read
the river, she passed out into the dark, gloomy sea.

Barney and Pomp had gone inside to make an exam
tion of the interior to see if it had been damaged by
current.

The room back of the cabin was a combined dining-r
and kitchen, and the apartment aft of that a storeroom
food, water and numerous tools, and other necessary
cles.

At the extreme end of the deck-house was a vestibul
signed as an exit for the occupants of the boat when
merged.

Everything in these apartments was intact.

Having so reported to Frank, they went below.

The battery was working the motor, the motor oper
the machinery, and the machinery revolved the screw. N

Back of the engine room there was a compartmen
which hung numerous metal diving suits and other su
rine essentials.

Nothing was injured here.

There were three more rooms, or rather reservoirs, d
in the vessel's run which were not to be penetrated.

The ones at the bow and stern were for holding en
air, hydraulically compressed, to last half a dozen me
a week.

By a peculiar device, it could be let into the living r
in jets, mixed with a spray of purifying solution.

There were valves for letting off the carbonic acid
resulting from the vitiation of this air when they bre
it.

The middle compartment was a water ballast reser

Valves opening in the hull admitted enough wat
overcome the buoyancy of the air and sink the boat to
desired depth.

By means of a pump this water could be forced
again to allow the boat to rise surfaceward, impelled b
buoyancy of the confined air.

When Barney and Pomp had finished their inspection, the torpedo boat had reached rough water.

They then went aloft and joined Frank in the cupola.

"Shure she's as loight as a bottle, an' she swims loike a cork," said Barney. "Have yez toimed her?"

"Yes; she can make thirty knots an hour," Frank replied.

"Whar yo' gwine wif her, honey?" asked Pomp, curiously.

Frank pointed up the coast.

"I'm going to blow the rocks to pieces that crop up to the top of the sea, and menace passing ships yonder," he replied.

"Troth, it's a dade of charity ter do that," said Barney.

"Ter shure an' it's only a fortnight ago a gallant bark struck her nose agin thim rocks, an' sint all hands ter ther bottom, God rist their sows in heaven, amin."

The rocks Frank designed to destroy were soon reached.

Over them the waves were boiling and hissing in foam.

Stopping the boat, Frank turned an electric current into a large powerful searchlight in the bow on deck.

Its dazzling shaft lit up the waters far ahead.

He slanted the light down in the sea about the rocks.

Then he left the wheel in Pomp's hands.

Going down below with Barney, he opened the breech of the electric gun, thrust in a cylindrical torpedo and peeped at it.

The waters were illuminated by the searchlight.

Now he saw the black, jagged rocks plainly.

Sighting the gun to bear upon them, Frank pressed a key.

The electric current discharged the gun with a loud thud of air and a tremendous bubbling outside.

Away flew the projectile through the water like a fish and instantly the automatic mechanism of the valve closed with a snap.

The rock struck by the torpedo was blown to atoms, and came from the sea with tons of water to a great height.

One of the flying pieces struck the Destroyer.

It hit one of the valves of the water chamber and smashed

In gurgled the water with a rush.

Down settled the Destroyer like a stone when she got full enough, and Frank and Barney fled up-stairs, for the coon was howling like fury in the pilot-house.

CHAPTER III.

OFF FOR THE WAR.

Fortunately for the inmates of the boat all the windows and doors were hermetically closed when she went down.

Consequently no water leaked into the living rooms.

"Wha' de mattah?" yelled Pomp, wildly. "Fo' why we am sinkin'?"

"A piece of rock struck our hull," Frank replied. "A hole has been stove in. The brine is entering the water chamber."

"Is it shure av that yez are?" queried Barney, anxiously.

"Oh, yes," said Frank. "No water is entering anywhere else."

"Yo' know how deep it am yere?" asked Pomp.

"About twenty-five fathoms."

"Have ye plinty air aboard?"

"Enough to last two hours," said Frank, glancing at one of the registers. "Ha! we are nearing the bottom now."

He pointed out the window.

The searchlight was gleaming through the brine with a foggy look, but showed up objects a great distance off.

Below them was a corrugated bed of sand.

It was dotted in places with kelp-strewn rocks.

Seaweeds of various kinds floated with the current, myriads of fishes swam about in the liquid depths, shells were strewn over the bottom, and a semi-gloom obscured everything beyond the radius of the light.

The bottom of the sea was a strange place.

Landing upon it with a gentle shock, the foundered Destroyer heeled over upon her side.

"Here we are at the bottom," said Frank. "And now to see what the damage is."

He found the air getting heavy.

Pulling a lever, he opened the valve that admitted the air from the reservoirs, and then went below.

Frank put on one of the metal diving suits.

It was made of aluminum, a light strong metal looking like silver—and fitted his figure like a suit of tights.

Upon the back was a knapsack filled with compressed air, which was automatically injected into the helmet in back of an electric lamp that rested on top.

This lamp derived its current from a battery in the knapsack.

Having attired himself in the suit, Frank went up into the deck-house, and going aft, he entered the vestibule.

Opening a valve, he let in the sea-water.

By thus immersing himself before venturing out, he escaped the danger of suddenly plunging into the great pressure of an unusual depth.

As soon as the chamber was full he opened the door.

Stepping out on the slanted deck, he found that his body and shoe weights held him down easily.

Although these weights amounted to sixty pounds in the

air, they lost three-quarters of that weight under water, and now cost him only as much exertion as it would to carry fifteen pounds on the surface.

Going to the lower side of the deck, Frank left the boat.

He passed around the hull.

The electric lamp was blazing.

It showed him the broken valve plate.

In order to get to the top it was necessary to take out the broken parts and set in an entirely new valve.

He returned to the boat.

In the storeroom were various duplicate parts of the boat.

Passing into the vestibule and closing the door, Frank pulled a lever on the wall that started a pump emptying the compartment.

As soon as it was empty he opened the storeroom door.

Here he procured everything he needed.

Calling Barney to aid him, the Celt donned a diving suit, and they both went out to repair the damage.

In less than an hour it was fixed.

Frank then passed into the turret.

Here he put the pump in motion emptying the water that had been shipped, and the Destroyer began to float upward.

The lighter she became the higher she arose.

Within a few moments she reached the surface.

Around swept the searchlight in quest of the dangerous rock, but Frank now saw that it was gone.

The torpedo had blown it to pieces.

"It's gone!" he exclaimed, in satisfied tones.

"Gorramighty!" chuckled Pomp. "Yo 'specs it could stan' dat shot an' stay dar? Marse Frank, dey ain't no ship dat will eber strike on dat yere rock agin an' go down, sah, yo' kin 'pend on dat."

"Faith, we have nothin' ter do, thin," said Barney.

"Our work is finished. Let us return to Readestown." The others assented.

Frank steered the boat back.

All hands were highly pleased with her work.

"She hasn't got a flaw in her construction," said Frank, as she ran into the basin. "This trial has proven that."

"Am yo' gwine fo' ter use her fo' any special purpose?"

"Not that I'm aware of yet," replied Frank; "but if an opportunity occurs, I'll make a deep-sea voyage in her, as I have almost nothing to do in Readestown now."

"Bedad, it's roosty I'm gittin' for the want av a divar-sion," sighed Barney, regretfully. "Upon me sowl, it's months since I've had a ruction or broken a head. Masther Frank, dear, it's ther pity indade that yer have spint slath-

ers av money on this boat, an' no wan will give yez th chance av blowin' thim ter pieces with it."

"Have no fear on that score," laughed Frank. "If chance comes in my way to make practical use of her, I find a means."

Just then the Destroyer's machinery stopped.

The lights were extinguished.

Having moored her our friends went home, for it had begun to rain and the hour was very late.

On the following morning, after breakfast, Frank took the newspaper up, and passed into his den to read it.

The first article that attracted his attention was an account of a tremendous rebellion occurring in Brazil, South America.

That unfortunate country was always in a broil of one kind or another for years past.

In this instance the rebels had been plotting to overthrow the emperor, Dom Pedro, and institute a republican form of government to suit themselves rather than continue as an empire, as it was then going.

An army and navy had been raised.

Arms and ammunition were procured.

A riot had been incited, and although the rebels had been driven from Rio Janeiro, some had taken to the forest and hills of Brazil, while others escaped to sea.

They had an armed fleet of twenty ships.

These vessels were bombarding the coast towns, blockading the harbors, and running down ships and plundering them.

Not only did these atrocities extend to Brazilians, but to vessels of foreign nations which fell into the power of the rebels were robbed and scuttled.

Those of the captured crews who could be impressed into the ranks of the rebels were spared, while the ones who refused were made to walk the plank.

According to the latest report, an American trading ship called the Starry Flag, had been captured.

Her crew, with one exception, were ruthlessly shot down.

The one who saved himself was the cabin boy—a youth seventeen, named Dick Davit.

By joining the rebels he saved his life.

At the first opportunity he escaped, however, and made his way back to New York, where he reported to the authorities what had happened.

The greatest indignation prevailed in the United States.

But our government could do nothing immediately to protect the American interests in Brazil, as all the available gun-boats in our limited navy were scattered on the seas remote from Brazil or on other business.

Frank Reade, Jr., read the account with the utmost interest.

He was a very patriotic young man, and it fired his blood to learn to what indignities and cruelties his countrymen had been subjected to by the lawless rebels.

With a dark frown upon his brow he bounded to his feet, and leaving the house, he telegraphed to the Secretary of the Navy:

"I wish to offer my services and my new electric torpedo boat to suppress the rebels of Brazil who have insulted our flag and murdered our seamen. If you wish to avail yourself of my offer, furnish me with a letter of marque, and I will depart for Rio at once to protect our American interests here."

Frank then told Barney and Pomp what he had done.

Both were delighted with the project.

On the following day a reply was returned, accepting Frank's generous offer.

It furthermore stated that the American boy, Dick Davit, had offered to accompany Frank's expedition in the capacity of a pilot, and to inform him of various valuable points regarding the rebels, their strongholds, movements, and so forth.

That night a number of United States officials and the boy in question came on from Washington, and held a secret conference with Frank, Barney and Pomp.

At its conclusion the entire matter was settled.

The inventor was given certain orders, he was empowered to act as if his vessel belonged to the American Navy, and Dick Davit was commissioned to go with Frank.

Then the officials saw the boat, and departed satisfied.

Hasty preparations were made for the voyage by our friends, and within twenty-four hours the Destroyer was quipped.

Leave was taken of every one ashore who had any claim upon the affections of our friends.

Then, accompanied by Dick, they departed in the torpedo boat for Brazil, embarked upon one of the most perilous voyages they had ever undertaken.

CHAPTER IV.

A MYSTERIOUS STEAMER.

The Destroyer made rapid progress down the coast, and Frank found that Dick Davit was a typical American boy, with a plucky, whole-souled disposition.

He was an orphan, and had followed the sea for two years.

Rather short and heavily built, attired in a sailor suit, and having a thin, sun-burned face, he was particularly noticeable for the keenness of his eyes and the happiness of his nature.

When the torpedo boat reached the Gulf of Mexico he had acquired a thorough knowledge of the operation of the boat, and could take his trick at managing her as well as the rest.

As he stood thus at the wheel one afternoon Frank entered, with a thoughtful look upon his face, and said:

"Do you know anything about the organization of the rebels who have committed most of the atrocities I have heard of?"

"Yes, sir," promptly replied the boy. "I was among the rascals for a space of three months, and, therefore, easily learned a great deal about them."

"My orders from the War Department are to proceed directly to Rio, and after delivering a message to Dom Pedro, take the American Consul and all citizens and sailors of our country under my protection."

"If you do, you'll be sure to have a fight with the rebels."

"So much the worse for them, then. Now, how about their organization?"

"Why, the most formidable part of the whole gang is aboard of the armed fleet. They are the fellows who are making most of the mischief. If we can wipe them off the sea, there will be an end to the downright piracy they've been committing."

"Very true. Under whose leadership are they?"

"Francisco Solano Lopez."

"What! The ambitious dictator of Paraguay?"

"Yes, sir. He commands the fleet."

Frank's surprise finds its foundation in actual history.

The man referred to was a political schemer who had caused no end of war and bloodshed for the Brazilians.

For several years the right-of-way up the Paraguay River to the interior of the Brazilian province of Matto Grosso had been in dispute.

Without any previous declaration of war, Lopez had captured a Brazilian vessel in the Paraguay, and followed up this outrage by an armed invasion of Matto Grosso and Rio Grande in Brazil and the province of Corrientes, in the Argentine Republic.

"Lopez," said Dick, "gathered a large force of Brazilian rebels about him, and conspired to overthrow the emperor. They were incited on by cupidity, for the arch schemer

offered to give them the wonderful diamond mines of Brazil if they succeeded."

"Ah! now I understand the motive."

"I explained this to the Secretary of War. Well, the rebels gladly joined in the movement. A riot followed. Dom Pedro drove them out. Once they got on the sea they became reckless. They acted like fiends. Piracy and plunder followed. Now they are sweeping the main ready for any rascality for gain. Lopez encourages this. By so doing he keeps them entirely at his mercy."

"We will have a tough horde to contend with."

"You may well believe so. The emperor sent out five ironclads to beat them. Two of these vessels returned badly crippled without doing any damage. The others lie buried fathoms deep under the ocean."

"By thunder, they must have modern arms!"

"Dynamite guns, Hotchkiss guns, forty-pounder broadside batteries, needle guns. In fact, there is scarcely a navy in the world better equipped for a hard struggle than they are."

A serious look swept over Frank's face.

This was more formidable than he expected.

Frightful as his own weapons were, he realized that he was destined to meet with foes that would have made the ironclads of powerful navies hesitate.

"Do you know where these men are to be found?" he asked.

"Yes; I can pilot you to their rendezvous."

"How many men are there on the ships?"

"As near as I could discover, one hundred on each ship."

"About two thousand men all told."

"That's the figure, sir."

"And are their vessels armored?"

"Several are; but all are very fast."

"Steamers or sailing vessels?"

"Both. Five steamers, I think."

Just then there came a shout from Barney.

He and Pomp had been sitting out on deck, the Irishman playing his fiddle and the darky thumping an accompaniment to the tune on his banjo.

"Sail ho!" yelled the Irishman.

He had suddenly discerned a vessel two leagues away to the southeastward, running at an angle which eventually would bring her athwart the course of the Destroyer.

Frank peered out the window.

In a moment he espied her.

Picking up a telescope, he scanned the ship.

She was a large steamer, with canvas up, and was making at least fifteen knots an hour.

It was then blowing fresh from the northwest, and choppy cross-sea was on that made the Destroyer rock.

"Looks like a European steamship," said Frank, presently.

"But where can she be heading on that course?" queried Dick.

"Probably for Panama."

They watched her for some time longer.

At the end of an hour they were a league closer together.

Frank then noticed that the Destroyer was seen, for some men on the steamer's deck were leveling binoculars at the electric boat.

After some time thus spent, the steamer changed her course and ran toward the Destroyer.

"It's a call they're a-goin' ter make us, sor," said Barney.

"Yes. I wonder what flag she sails under?"

"Faith, she moight be a Bulgarian or a Kentucky privateer, for all we kin tell be ther naked luck av her flagstaff!"

"Ha! There goes a signal to haul to!"

A puff of smoke and flash of fire came from the steamer's deck.

It was followed by the report of a gun.

As the roar died away Frank stopped the Destroyer.

In a short time the steamer ranged up in hailing distance and our friends observed that her decks swarmed with dark, swarthy crew.

Still no flag was shown.

But the stars and bars were run up on the torpedo boat's pole by Pomp, and when the steamer drew closer, some of the crew yelled:

"Ahoy, there!"

"What do you want?" shouted Frank.

"Come aboard. I wish to speak to you."

"We have no quarter boats."

"Oh! what sort of a craft is that?"

"An electric boat."

"The Destroyer?"

"Yes," replied Frank, amazed that they knew her, for she had only just been built, and it seemed odd that any one in so remote a place as this could have heard of her already.

"Captain Frank Reade, Jr., commanding?"

"Yes," assented the inventor, more and more astonished.

"Bound for Rio Janeiro?"

"Yes," said Frank, for the third time, his amazement increasing.

"To fight the Brazilian rebels?"

"Yes!"

By this time the young inventor was the most surprised

person on the ocean, for it was incredible that these utter strangers knew his vessel, himself, and his intentions.

There was a momentary pause.

Then the speaker shouted:

"Well, I'm glad you have admitted it."

"Why so?" demanded Frank, curiously.

"Because we have been on the lookout for you."

"You have? For what reason, may I ask?"

"One of our agents in Washington learned all about you and your intended cruise, and cabled us the news."

"Ah! So that's how you learned all about us?"

"Exactly," was the reply.

"But why are you so interested in me?"

"If you will come aboard, I'll tell you."

"I can't. I have no boat, as I told you."

"Wait a moment."

The speaker turned to one of his companions and said something.

A short dialogue ensued between them.

Then the man shouted to Frank:

"Ahoy, there!"

"What now?"

"Can't you run alongside?"

"No; I might damage my vessel in this choppy sea."

"We will put out fenders for you."

"I prefer to remain where I am."

"Very well."

"Tell me what you want."

"It is a secret."

"I have no secrets from my companions."

"Very well; since you are so obstinate, we were watching for you to blow you and your craft to pieces, as this is Francisco Lopez's boat, and you are a bitter foe."

As the man spoke the steamer swung around, her ports now open on the starboard side, and in the opening our friends saw a grim array of broadside guns frowning out.

At the breech of each gun there stood a man with a lock-trigger in his hand, ready to fire upon the Destroyer at the word of command from the rebel chief.

Frank uttered a cry of dismay.

He now understood the mystery.

CHAPTER V.

UNDER THE GULF.

"All hands inside—quick!"

Frank gave utterance to this sharp order.

At the same juncture he closed the cupola window.

Barney and Pomp scrambled inside with a rush.

Frank pulled the lever of the water chamber valves.

Down settled the Destroyer beneath the waves very rapidly, for the young inventor had drawn the apertures wide open.

A shout of astonishment escaped the steamer's crew, and the gunners pulled the lock-strings of their weapons.

A thunderous roar pealed out that shook the sea, but so sudden had been the descent of the Destroyer that the howling cannon-balls flew over her.

Had Frank been a moment later in carrying out his plan, the submarine boat would have been struck.

Strong as she was, such a heavy battery at short range would have done her the most serious damage.

Further down she sank in the sea.

Frank had an instrument for measuring her depth from the surface of the sea.

It was an ingenious thing worked by pressure.

By deducting fifteen pounds to the square inch, which is the pressure of the atmosphere on the earth and sea, Frank calculated eight and one-half pounds for every twenty feet he descended.

For example: When the boat reached a depth of twenty feet he stopped her descent by shutting off the influx of water, and saw that the register recorded twenty-three and one-half pounds.

By taking off the fifteen pounds air pressure, that left eight and one-half pounds pressure, and he thus knew he was down twenty feet.

"Safe!" he muttered, sighing with relief.

"By jingo! That was a narrow escape!" said Dick.

"Didn't you recognize the steamer as that of Lopez?"

"No; for I never saw his flagship before."

"But you have met him?"

"Of course. But he wasn't the man who spoke to you."

"Are you sure?"

"Of course. Lopez can't speak English."

"Still he must have been aboard."

"Yes; but I didn't see him, sir."

"What sort of a looking man is Lopez?"

"Short, thin, and wears a bushy, black beard."

"We must not remain here. They saw where we went down and may train their guns to bear upon this spot."

"Confound them. They know all about us."

"One of their spies sent them the news by telegraph."

"Now we can't take them by surprise."

"But we can run our boat under their hull, and fire torpedoes at them. One shot will do to blow them to——"

"Look out!" interposed Dick, in sudden alarm.

He had been looking out the heavy plate glass window, and saw a white streak fly past.

It was a cannon-ball flying down through the water from the surface of the sea.

"They've commenced to do just what I feared," said Frank.

He seized the machinery lever and pulled it.

The boat's screw began to revolve, and she glided ahead without causing a ripple on the surface.

Frank started the electric lights ablaze.

A silvery halo extended all around the boat.

Toward the surface the brine had a pale green hue in the light of the declining sun.

This color intensified gradually as it descended into the profounder depths, until it looked positively black.

Through the element there flashed the bodies of various kinds of denizens of the deep.

Some fled from the boat in excessive terror, while others, becoming accustomed to it, did not hesitate to swim up to her.

Far below, in the gloomy abyss, the tops of tropical corals rose up from the bottom, crusted with wiry sponges, shell fish, and brilliant submarine flowers.

To Frank and his friends the strange, wonderful scenery of the singular marine world was no novelty, as they had been buried in the sea on other occasions.

Dick, however, had never before been under the ocean, and gazed out the window in utter amazement.

At some distance from the spot where they had first descended Frank stopped the Destroyer.

"I am going to blow that craft out of the sea," said he.

Just then Barney and Pomp rushed up.

"Arrah, but its' ther shpalpeens thim wor!" growled the Celt in angry tones. "Faith, a mon moight as well hov an assassin shtale up behoind an' plug him in ther loights av his liver wid a carvin' knoife as ter git shot at widout warnin'."

"Remember that we are not dealing with honest enemies."

"Thin it's their own weapons I'd focht 'em wid," said Barney, furiously. "Phwhy don't yer dhrop thim a pill in ther lug, and dhrove thim troo ther clouds?"

"Just my intention," said Frank.

"Thin howld on till I grip ther wheel, an' bejabers I'll have yez bechune that ship an ther locker av Davy Jones in one minute be ther chronometrical clock."

He took the management of the boat.

The rest proceeded down to the gun-room.

Barney then began to manipulate the searchlight in an attempt to locate the steamer.

Along glided the Destroyer beneath the sea, like some

gigantic fish, and the glaring searchlight wandered from point to point in an effort to locate the hull of the ship.

A quarter of an hour passed by without the light entering the vessel, and Barney grew impatient.

There were tons of gulf weed floating about, w caught on the bow of the boat in great quantities.

"Be heavens! it's quare entoirely phwere she could garn," muttered the Irishman, in impatient tones. "She must hov put on shtame an' wint loike the divil for we'd be afther soakin' her wid wan av our torpedies."

At this juncture there came a sudden shock.

It ran through the boat in a convulsive tremor.

She began to diminish her speed.

Again the shock was felt.

Then she stopped for a moment.

Then she went ahead a little.

Then she stopped again.

Barney looked scared.

He stopped the machinery.

"Begorry, she has a fit!" he muttered. "Hey, Frank

"What's the matter with the boat?" called the inven

"It's a case of jim-jams she's in."

"Have you run down anything?"

"Sorra a thing, me jewel. Clap yer oye on ther machinery."

Frank complied.

He could find no defect.

The batteries were in good order.

So was the screw-shaft.

Yet it was evident something was wrong.

But what?

Surely nothing inside.

Frank pondered.

"Maybe the wheel is caught."

The idea was plausible.

It would catch, jar, and hitch that way if it were.

He went up to the cupola.

"Send her to the top!" he ordered.

Barney obeyed.

When she burst upon the surface nothing was seen the steamship. She had vanished as completely as if she had foundered.

Frank pointed off to the windward, where a dense fog was rolling up across the sea.

"She must have fled and buried herself in that fog," said he.

"May the ould Nick floy away wid 'em!" growled Bar

"There I've been huntin' fer thim loike a bloodhound,

"Ivan to foind! Shure, it's kickin' meself I'll soon be in." "I'm convinced that our wheel is bound." "Bad cess to it! Whoy did it happen now? If we had use av ther same, shure we could soon overhaul that adhoun, an' give him ther dacentest lickin' he iver had." "Didn't you notice lots of weed drifting down below?" "Slathers av it." "I'll go overboard and examine the screw." Frank put on a diving suit. Calling Pomp and Dick to aid him, they passed out on k. Pausing on the after-deck, Frank tied one end of a rope und his body, and handed the other end to the coon. "Lower me over the stern until I signal you to stop," d he. "Yessah," said Pomp. "Come here, Dick, an' give me a p'." Over went Frank the next moment. He shook the rope when he reached the wheel. As he expected, he found it bound with an immense col- tion of seaweed which it had wound around its screw des and shaft. To tear it away required considerable time. Nearly an hour was spent ere the wheel was free of the encumbrance, and Frank realized that by this time the amer must have gained a point fifteen or twenty miles yond his reach. He was just upon the point of signaling Pomp to haul n up when suddenly an enormous shark shot out of the om and made a lightning-like dive for him. Over went the monster upon its back to seize him in mouth, when Frank swung himself aside. The frightful creature missed him. But its teeth caught the rope above him and severed it. Down dropped Frank like a stone.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BOMBARDMENT OF RIO.

A thrill of horror passed over Frank when he felt the pe part and his body sinking down. The shark shot past him and vanished in the gloom. Down went the young inventor and out flew his hands, en one of them came in contact with the screw. He clutched the blade. In a twinkling he had hold with the other hand. His descent was checked. The wheel turned with the weight of his body until the ade to which he clung hung beneath.

He hung down at arm's length. In an instant he collected his scattered faculties and calmly thought over the serious situation. "If I can get astride of the axis of the wheel," he pon- dered, "I can free myself of these leaden weights. After that I can manage." He exerted all his muscles and hitched himself upward inch by inch, until his hands touched the axis. Then he seized it between the stone post and the center of the screw. He quickly hauled himself up and got astride between two of the blades of the propeller. Here he unfastened the weights on his back and breast. Letting them fall, he began to undo the leaden soles on his shoes, in the meantime keeping a good lookout for the shark. Away went one of the soles. He loosened the other. Before he could get it off the wheel began to revolve. Frank was dismayed; for he realized that Barney must have started the machinery to see if the screw was clear yet. Before he could get off the remaining shoe weight he had to grasp the blade of the screw and hang on. Around and around whirled the wheel, faster and faster every moment, until it was fairly flying. The young inventor hung on for his life. He was undergoing the most frightful torture. Every moment it seemed as if he would be whirled from the wheel. With every revolution his body was fiercely whirled around in the water until his brain fairly swam. A tremendous roaring and hissing sounded in his ears. He momentarily expected his glass visor to break from the fearful pounding it was getting, and let in the water to drown him, while if he were forced to let go the flying wheel, if one of the blades hit him, it would cleave him like an ax. Barney had put on the power. He wanted to see if the wheel would turn yet. Finding that it did, he chuckled and kept it going until he heard Pomp yell at him that Frank was off the rope. Unable to bear the awful pounding any longer, and half fainting from the dreadful ordeal, Frank relaxed his hold. He was shot away into the sea. Down he sank, dragged by his weighted foot. The sudden transition partially revived him. He felt himself sinking. And he realized that if he were to go to a certain depth the pressure of the sea would crush him.

With rare presence of mind he kicked off the loosened loaded sole.

As soon as he was relieved of it, he stopped sinking, and the air in his reservoir in the knapsack carried him surface-ward.

Within a minute he floated on top.

Here he quickly revived.

Pomp saw him.

"Barney!" yelled the coon, excitedly. "Come about dar. Marse Frank am on de top. Whoop dar! yo' looney I'ish—yo' heah me?"

"All right!" roared the Celt, as he turned the boat.

By this time Frank felt like himself again.

He saw the boat some distance off approaching him slowly.

But he also observed something else that made him shudder.

It was the dorsal fin of the shark between him and the boat, and the man eater was swimming toward him.

Frank had a knife in his belt with which he had been hewing away the weed from the screw.

He drew it out, fastened his glance upon the cannibal fish, and waited for the attack upon which it was intent.

Along it swept, its black fin cutting the brine like a dagger, and when it arrived within a few feet of him it turned, showing its white belly, and shot up toward him.

Frank drew his legs to the surface.

Down shot his arm into the brine, and as the jaws of the shark snapped together in the place where his body had been, he jammed the keen, long blade into its body.

The impetus with which it came carried it along, grazing Frank's stomach, and as he held the knife rigidly, the edge gashed a frightful wound in the shark.

The knife was torn from Frank's hand.

Instantly the water was dyed crimson with the man-eater's blood, and a convulsive movement of its body swung its tail around, dealing Frank a terrific blow.

The next moment it disappeared down into the sea.

By the time Frank recovered from the shock of the blow, the Destroyer glided up to him.

Pomp reached over and hauled him on deck.

"Golly!" yelled the delighted coon, rolling his eyes and showing his white teeth in a broad grin, "I'se got him! I'se got him!"

Anl carried away with enthusiasm, he turned a hand-spring, landed on his big feet, and did a shuffle.

Dick helped Frank to get off his helmet.

"Oh, Mr. Reade, I thought you were done for!" he cried.

"Dick, I've had an experience I never wish to repeat."

"What happened to you, sir?"

Frank explained.

The astonishment of his listeners was intense, and Pomp cried angrily:

"Dat fool Barney oughter know bettah dan ter start wheel!"

"Well, we won't grumble over what's past, as long as one has been hurt," laughed Frank, good-naturedly. "V must run after that fugitive steamer, and try to capture he since I have relieved the screw of the kelp-binding."

Frank went up in the wheel-house when he had taken his diving suit, and told Barney what he intended to do.

The coon went into the kitchen to cook supper, as the shades of night were falling on the sea.

Frank observed the fog bank very close by, and as he had seen in which direction it was, soon after it swallowed up the fugitive steamer, he followed the same course.

Although the Destroyer made very rapid time all night and leaving the fog astern, opened up the South American coast, the light of another day failed to show him Lopez boat.

The electric boat ran down the eastern coast of South America, and headed for the harbor of Rio Janeiro.

She passed into the port, and Frank observed that the fort was heavily garrisoned with soldiers.

This was the only indication of trouble he observed.

This harbor was one of the most spacious, secure and beautiful in the world, and was entered from the south.

On the left of the entrance rises a peak called Sugar Loaf Mountain, and all around the bay the waters were girt by mountains and lofty hills of every variety of picturesque and fantastic outline.

Rio stands four miles from the entrance.

Seven green and mound-like hills diversified its site, and the white-walled and vermillion-roofed houses clustered in the intervening valleys and climbed the eminences in long lines.

Commodious wharves and quays were built along the bay, and west of the old district the new city was divided by the Campo de Santa Anna, an immense park, fronted by which were the town hall, garrison, palace of the senate and other important buildings.

The electric boat ran up to the dock and Frank went ashore.

He soon gained an audience with the emperor, and gave his letter to that genial gentleman.

A private conversation followed, during which Frank learned that the rebels had gone away several days previously.

Nothing had since been seen of them. It was hoped that they had disbanded and given up the project of trying to gain the supremacy. In order to rebuff them, however, a fleet of ironclads was standing in readiness for action further up the bay. Having spent a diplomatic and yet social hour with the emperor, who spoke English pretty well, Frank went to see the American minister. To this gentleman he gave certain congressional orders, mapped out a course of procedure for the future. Night had fallen dark, and a storm was threatening, by the time Frank finished his conference. He then parted with the consul to return to the Destroyer. But he had not gone far along the street when he, as well as everybody else, was startled to hear a howl in the distance. A moment afterwards there sounded a frightful explosion. In a moment the truth flashed across Frank's mind. "The rebel ships are at the mouth of the harbor bombarding the city!" he muttered in alarm. Several more shells came flying toward the city. They burst in different localities. A terrible scene of panic arose on all sides. People were killed and houses destroyed by the roaring shells, crowds of screaming men, women and children were running through the streets in a panic, and the roll of drums and tooting of soldiers' bugles were heard. All was a scene of fear, panic and excitement as the exploding shells came flying into the city from the sea. Frank ran like a madman for the water front to get aboard the torpedo boat.

CHAPTER VII.

A SEA FIGHT.

"The city is bombarded! All hands to quarters! Make ready for action!" Thus cried Frank as he dashed aboard the Destroyer. His companions had heard the noise of exploding shells and were standing about the deck watching the city. A scramble was made for the interior of the boat. In a few moments everybody was ready. Frank started the Destroyer down the bay under full steam, and the ironclad anchored up the harbor got under way. In a quarter of an hour the lower fortress was reached, and the flash and roar of guns came from that place.

Screaming shells were curving through the air toward the fort, and bursting with roars that shook the sea.

As soon as the torpedo boat opened up the headland, Frank discerned a number of shadowy ships in the offing, from the decks of which there came the continued rumble and roar of guns.

"There they are now, Pomp," he said to the coon, who stood beside him in the cupola. "I'll stop their barking presently."

"Fo' de lan' sake! How many ob dem am dey?"

"That's hard to say in this gloom. But I can count five."

"Gwine to sock 'em, sah?"

"Under water. There's my prey. See the big fellow yonder who seems to be doing so much of the firing?"

"Dat sailin' vessel?"

"Exactly. Here, you take the wheel. Send her down under that craft, Pomp, and get me in position to fire at her."

"How deep yo' gwine down?"

"Not more than fifteen feet. That will be enough to cover the top. I'll go down and arrange the gun."

The coon was perfectly familiar with the boat.

When Frank left him, he sent her under as he was directed, and she glided toward the fighting ship.

Frank loaded the gun, with Barney's assistance, and sending Dick aloft to have the light flashed, he peered out the bull's-eye in the bow in search of the vessel's hull.

In a few moments he saw it ahead to the right.

Pomp turned the boat about and brought it to a pause.

Then Frank fired.

The cylindrical projection flew through the water so rapidly that only a white, foamy streak was left behind it.

In a moment more it struck the ship's hull and burst.

A heavy dull boom was heard inside the boat, for water is a good conductor of sound.

Then there was seen a sudden and violent rending of the hull amid a mass of turbid water agitated into whiteness.

The ship vanished.

She was literally blown to fragments.

Not one of her crew of rebels escaped alive.

Frank reloaded the gun.

"That settles her case," he remarked.

"Be heavens!" said Barney, "it's the illigant boost yer afther givin' thim. Shure, they won't come down in a week."

Frank put his lips to a speaking tube.

"Hey, Pomp!" he called.

"Yes, sah," replied the coon immediately.

"Send her to the surface and find another."

"Orright, sah! Right away, sah!"

And the pump began to throb, throwing out the water from the reservoir, and the boat began to rise.

When she reached the surface the darky peered around, and saw by the searchlight that the rebel ships were retreating.

The terrible destruction of one of their ships in that strange, mysterious manner gave them to understand that some awful power was pitted against them.

As soon as the Destroyer arose from the sea they knew what it was, and despite the weapons they carried, they fled.

A veritable panic had seized them.

They feared the electric boat.

None of them knew at what unexpected moment she might glide beneath their hull and blow them to pieces.

It imbued them with an indescribable feeling of anxious suspense.

Moreover, the Brazilian men-of-war were coming out of the bay, and now began to fire upon them.

Some of the shots from the ironclads flew over the torpedo boat and filled Pomp with alarm.

"Lord amassy!" he gasped. "Mebbe dey fink we am one ob dem yere rebels, an' done shoot us."

He saw that they were in great peril.

Locating the rebel boats ahead, he sent the Destroyer under.

By so doing he could pursue the fugitives, and at the same time keep the Destroyer out of sight so she wouldn't get hit.

"Hello, there, Pomp! What are you doing?" shouted Frank, in surprise.

"Dar's de ironclads gwine fo' to shoot us, sah."

"Oh, I see; where are you taking us now?"

"Aftah anudder ob de rebel ships."

"All right—let her go."

The Destroyer was swiftly shooting ahead.

She ran on for half an hour, but nothing was seen of the vessels she was pursuing.

Pomp raised her again.

It was then raining and blowing hard.

A flash of lightning tore across the sky.

As its brilliant gleam lit up the sea, the coon observed one of the rebel ships bearing down upon him.

There was no time to get out of the way, for she was almost on top of the Destroyer when Pomp saw her.

"Murdah!" he yelled, spinning the wheel apart.

The torpedo boat essayed to glide away, but there came a grinding crash as the bow of the ship struck her.

She was knocked far over on the side from the collision and the ship's bowsprit rose high in the air.

A chorus of yells peeled from the startled crew of the ship, and Frank came running up from below.

At one glance he saw what happened and shouted down.

"Barney, out on deck with you and see if we are damaged."

"I will that," returned the Celt, complying.

Out the door he dashed, and in a moment more he was making a careful examination.

Frank waited suspensefully.

"Well?" he shouted.

"Shure, there's a hole knocked in our soide."

"As I feared. Can it be repaired?"

"I think so. We're shipping water be ther bucketful."

Frank glanced at the rebel ship.

Her bow had been rent to pieces.

The head planks had been torn and splintered, and she was fast filling and settling down.

Her crew had abandoned all hope of saving her, and were taking to the boats.

"She's a wreck!" muttered Frank.

"Don' spec she am as hard as dis yere boat!" chuckled Pomp.

"Nor shall we have to waste a shot on her," said Frank.

Frank backed the Destroyer away from the ship, for she was fast sinking, and bound to go down.

Three of the quarter boats got safely away loaded with men, but the other one, while still attached to the main lines, was violently dashed against the ship's planks and smashed.

The yelling crew were hurled into the sea.

Here the ones who could swim kept afloat while the others who couldn't sank like stones.

It was an appalling sight.

The ship settled lower every moment.

Frank drove the submarine boat over to the swimmer, and they eagerly grasped her deck and clambered up.

In this manner twenty of them were picked up.

All were Brazilians.

Along went the Destroyer swiftly.

She had not gone fifty yards from the foundering vessel when it sunk forever, leaving a big eddy on the surface.

Had the torpedo boat been floating over the spot then she might have been sucked down with her.

This would have been extremely disastrous with the torpedo in her side, for she might never have risen again.

"Pomp, attach a hose to the pump, and start it emptying the water from the engine room!" cried Frank.

"Yessah!" replied the coon, hastening downstairs.

"Dick, you and Barney can make prisoners of the men on the deck, and we'll carry them to the city and put them in the hands of the authorities."

"Ain't you going to continue the chase, sir?"

"No. We are too badly disabled. I must repair the damage. I'll leave the vessel to the mercy of the ironclads. Besides, it's too much of a job to hunt for those ships in this gloom, for none of them carry lights."

The boy went below.

He and Barney had but little trouble to apprehend all the men on the deck and lock them in one of the rooms. By the time this was done, the water was pouring into the interior of the boat so fast that she sat low in the sea. The coon came rushing upstairs presently.

His eyes bulged, and his ebony face was convulsed with fear.

"Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord!" he groaned dismally.

"What's the matter?" demanded Frank, in tones of anxiety. "Why don't you start the pump? Don't you see the water is filling?"

"Kain't do it, nohow."

"Why not?"

"De pump am bruck!"

"Great heavens!" gasped Frank. "The boat will sink under!"

Every one was terribly alarmed.

CHAPTER VIII.

MEETING A CAPSIZED BARK.

Clearly, unless something was promptly done to stop the influx of the water through the hole stove in her side by the stranded ship of the rebels, the Destroyer would go down. The twenty prisoners would perish.

As Pomp had seen that the pump was broken, Frank rapidly devised a plan of action.

"Dick Davit!" he cried.

"Yes, sir," replied the boy.

"Take the wheel and steer for the bay."

"Wha' yo' gwine ter do?" asked Pomp.

"You and Barney must help me stop up that hole."

He hastened below as he spoke and saw that there were several feet of water down in the engine room.

If it got much higher it was bound to injure the batteries, cut off their source of power and leave them helpless.

The storm was raging wildly outside.

It tossed the boat like a cork.

Bazney was called, and they got some tools, bored bolt holes in the plates around the breech, and finally fastened a plate over the opening to exclude the water.

In the meantime the ironclads had vanished in pursuit of the fugitive rebel ships that had been bombarding Rio under the orders of Francisco Lopez.

It was then nearly midnight.

"That will do till we reach port," said Frank.

"Bedad, I'm wishin' we could have ther remainin' eighteen rebel ships roon us down ther same way," laughed Barney.

It had not taken them long to blow up one of the vessels and send the other to the bottom from the collision.

Finally the torpedo boat ran into the bay.

She quickly reached the city.

The streets were thronged with people and soldiers, as the excitement of the bombardment had not subsided any, and Frank called a detachment of troops on board to get the prisoners.

They formed a double file from the boat to the dock, and the prisoners were marched out between them.

Closing around them, the soldiers escorted them through the street to the city prison.

In a few moments the news spread like wildfire through the city that some of the rebels had been captured.

Crowds of excited people came swarming from all directions, and the fury of those who had suffered from the bombardment arose to the boiling point.

As they proceeded along, the crowd increased and the excitement augmented until there suddenly rang out wild cries of:

"Kill the villains!"

"Tear them from the soldiers!"

"Down with the traitors!"

"Justice! Justice!"

Missiles began to fly from the crowd.

The captain had trouble to keep his men calm.

Taking courage, the crowd charged on the soldiers.

It was their intention to gain possession of the prisoners and wreak vengeance of the direst kind upon them.

On they rushed furiously.

Now the soldiers turned and presented their bayonets at them.

That brought the excited people to a pause.

"Back with you!" shouted the captain. "We will shoot you down like dogs if you interfere with our duty!"

The rabble was intimidated.

Pausing and hanging back, they allowed the soldiers to march on in peace with their prisoners.

In this manner the rebels were finally lodged in prison and ultimately suffered the penalty of their crimes.

Frank and his companions remained aboard the Destroyer that night, and in the morning saw one of the ironclads come in, towing two of the rebel boats astern.

Both were badly battered by gunshots.

A large number of prisoners were taken, and when the news spread to the shore it was the cause of universal rejoicing.

Frank and his companions set to work upon the damaged plate of the Destroyer and repaired it.

The young inventor then went ashore, and having learned what had transpired on the sea when they left it, he returned, told his friends the news, and the Destroyer left the bay.

It was a clear and beautiful day upon the water, an easy, off-land swell rolling the sea in sweeping undulations.

Frank passed out on deck with Dick.

"The commander of the ironclad told me that they had a battle with the rebels," said he to the boy, "and after the two ships were captured that we saw, he left the rest of the fleet flying through the storm after the others."

"I think those fellows will run for their retreat, sir."

"Whereabouts is it?" queried Frank.

"Down the coast near Sagoa do Sombrio."

"Can you guide us to the place?"

"Very easily, as I have often been there."

Frank nodded and glanced around over the sea.

A short distance away he observed a large, dark object floating in the water.

A keener glance showed him that it took on a metallic hue.

"See there!" he exclaimed.

"Why, it's a big copper kettle, ain't it?"

"Looks like it," Frank assented.

The huge object was moving up and down with a slow, steady movement with every roll of the waves.

Frank turned to Barney, who stood at the wheel.

"Steer for that thing," he called to the Celt.

"Howly ham! An' phwat do yer call it?"

"Can't you make it out from your elevation?"

The Irishman silently studied it for a few moments, and then a look of intelligence crossed his face.

"Shure, it's ther bottom av a ship," said he.

And so it was.

The vessel was completely capsized.

In a few moments the Destroyer reached it.

As she ran alongside, Frank was startled to hear a low, muffled yell coming apparently from within the craft.

It made him jump.

"Good Heaven! Did you hear that, Dick?" he asked.

"It sounded like a human voice in the vessel."

"And so it was! Hark!"

Again the faint, smothered shouts were heard.

"Help! Help!"

"Oh, God! must we die here?"

There were several voices calling.

Frank rushed inside and procured a grenade.

This he hurled at the end of the floating derelict.

It blew away a large portion of the stern of the vessel, the keel, and knocked her over at an angle.

A chorus of cries were then heard plainer inside.

A few moments afterward a man appeared, climbing up the opening Frank had burst in the hull.

The moment he saw the Destroyer, he screamed in English:

"Saved! Saved! This way, messmates!"

Up came several more men who had been entombed within the wreck.

All hands wore sailor costumes.

It was evident at a glance that they were Americans, a hoarse cry of joy escaped them when they saw the stroyer.

Barney now drove the boat close to the wreck.

In a moment more four men had left the wreck and stood safely upon the deck of the submarine boat.

"Any more?" questioned Frank.

"No; there were but four of us, sir."

"How did you get in this terrible position?"

"Why, you see, that was the A1 clipper bark Sally T., of Boston, and we had a cargo of freight aboard, were bound for San Francisco, when we were stopped by steamer Chaco Boreal——"

"That's Lopez's craft," interposed Dick.

"Well," continued the sailor, "those rascals boarded and before we realized their game they attacked us. In the fight eight of the crew were killed. We four are all who are left to tell the tale. They locked us down between decks and rifled the bark. Then they stood off on their own ground and began to fire at our vessel. We heard the masts go down. All of a sudden the vessel capsized. But she floated bottom upward. The air in her was almost exhausted when she found us. Our experience inside the bark was terrible. None of us expected to escape. But your arrival has saved us our error."

"Here is another example of the brutality of the rebels," Frank muttered. "Now I am convinced of the piracy you said they committed, Dick, it only makes me

the more eager to avenge the injury done to our country-
ade."

He questioned the men at some length further, and then
ded for the coast, where he landed them.

The torpedo boat then went on..

Toward the fall of night a steamer was descried ahead,
and as the Destroyer rapidly overhauled her, Dick cried:

"Why, there's the Chaco Boreal now!"

"It's the same craft we encountered in the Gulf," said
Frank.

He had gained such a good view of the rebel ship that
could make no mistake about her.

A daring plan to capture her suggested itself to Frank's
mind, and he at once called all hands inside.

He then mounted to the cupola.

Here he sent the Destroyer under the sea to a depth of
fifty feet, and drove her flying toward the rebel's flagship.

Preparations were made to carry out the plan Frank had
arranged to get the steamer in their power.

CHAPTER IX.

STRANDED ON A SUNKEN BAR.

Everything became very dark within the boat when she
sank under the sea, until Frank turned on the electric
lights.

There was a strong submarine current flowing from the
west which kept sending the Destroyer to the leeward.

It thus became necessary for Frank to manage the boat
with the utmost skill to keep her on her course, for he had
no means of seeing where the steamer was.

To keep her located, he could only follow a direction such
as he felt sure she laid in.

A dim glow from the electric lights fell out from the
boat's windows and lighted up the brine.

When the searchlight poured its dazzling glow ahead of
the Destroyer, it revealed a peculiar scene.

Below the bottom was seen at the depth of less than one
hundred feet under the keel of the boat.

It was covered with queer coral formations.

Myriads of fishes were swimming about in the liquid,
flashing here and there like fireflies as the electric glow
reflected upon their silvery scales.

Swarms of pulpy jelly-fish lazily floated above the boat,
accompanied by numerous nautilus and Portuguese men-
of-war, with long, graceful tentacles hanging down from
their transparent bodies like the cord-like roots of trees.

Huge leviathans mingled with the tiniest of the finny

tribe, and crabs without number were seen among the brill-
iant sea-plants festooning the bottom.

Black rocks rose from the midst of muddy patches cov-
ered with slimy mosses and lichens, over which singular
bugs were creeping on a continual hunt for food.

All was movement.

The currents stirred up the sand in places until it so
clouded the water that our friends could not see a yard
ahead.

Massive ferns shot up fifty feet from the bed of the
ocean and mingled with gigantic trees and grasses.

The scene was constantly changing from arid plains of
white sand, in which laid buried the wrecks of ships, to
rocky spots of forbidding appearance that suddenly merged
into places covered with the most beautiful and luxuriant
vegetation.

They passed over hills and valleys, yawning chasms and
rugged plateaux in an ever-changing light.

It was a most wonderful region.

But it was marked by a deathly silence.

Finally Frank caught sight of the steamer ahead.

Her screw was rapidly revolving and churning the water
to the whitest foam in its wake.

The young inventor kept his glance upon the spinning
wheel intently for some moments, and then called Pomp.

"Take the wheel," said he.

The coon complied.

Frank then went below and put on the diving suit.

Leaving the boat, he went up forward with a bombshell
in his hand, to which there were a binding-post and a cup
sucker.

He had a copper wire attached to the binding-post.

Making a motion with his hand to the darky, the boat was
raised until her bow was just beneath the steamer's screw.

Here Frank pressed the cup sucker to the vessel's stern-
post, and the bomb was held fast there.

Another motion of his hand caused Pomp to slacken the
Destroyer's speed, causing her to fall off behind the steamer.

Frank paid out the insulated wire.

When they were one hundred yards astern of the steamer,
he motioned the darky a third time.

He started the boat ahead at the same rate of speed at
which the steamer was traveling.

Frank then carried the wire to a binding-post on the out-
side of the deck-house of the Destroyer.

Here he secured it.

Then he signaled Pomp once more.

The coon turned a switch that flung an electric current
into the post to which the wire was attached.

This current exploded the bomb with terrific force.

It blew the wheel and rudder off the steamer and sent her stern high up in the air for a moment.

Pomp stopped the torpedo boat, for the steamer had come to a sudden pause and now lay tossing helplessly upon the waves, unable to steer or move by her screw.

Seeing that the vessel's hull had not been injured by the explosion, Frank thereupon wound up the wire and beckoned to Barney to come out.

The Irishman obeyed.

He carried a towing hawser, to which another and more powerful suction cup was fastened.

This they secured to the bow of the steamer.

The end of the line was made fast to a ring-bolt in the stern of the Destroyer.

Frank and Barney then returned to the interior of the boat, and taking off their diving suits, the young inventor cried:

"There! We've rendered the steamer helpless. She's at our mercy. We can now tow her back to Rio with her entire crew and cargo, whether they wish to go or not."

"Howly floy!" chuckled the Irishman. "It's roastin' thim we are entoirely. Niver a bit did they expect ther loikes av this. Wanst we're afther nailin' ould Lopez, ther gang will be loike a chicken wid its head an' tail cut aff, d'ye moind?"

Frank assumed duty at the wheel.

He sent the boat back toward Rio, steering by a compass adapted to use under water.

The Destroyer pulled the disabled steamer after her rapidly, none of the crew of rebels having seen what caused the catastrophe, nor could they see what towed them.

An hour passed by in this manner, and the gloom of night fell upon the sea.

Frank turned the rays of the searchlight back toward the ship after awhile, when his keen glance fell upon an object in the water beside the big vessel.

It was the bottom of a quarter boat.

Instantly it occurred to him that there was mischief going on.

"By thunder!" he exclaimed. "I believe the crew is deserting the steamer in the quarter boats."

"Golly!" gasped Pomp, in startled tones. "Am dat so?"

"Look back there. Isn't that the bottom of a boat?"

"Fo' shuah. Yo' fink dey am desertin' de ship?"

"I'm going to the surface and see."

And Frank started the pumps, and the boat began to rise rapidly.

In a few moments she emerged upon the surface.

The moon and stars were out.

The big steamer laid some distance behind the torpedo boat, and there was a rocky shore only half a mile away.

Between the steamer and shore was a string of half a dozen quarter boats filled with Brazilians.

Frank had made no error—the crew was deserting the vessel, as they could not handle her.

It was probable that they suspected what had caused the trouble, and were intent upon saving their necks.

The Destroyer had no sooner appeared than they saw and set up a wild yell.

"You see I'm right," said Frank.

"Gosh A'mighty!" groaned Pomp.

"We must prevent their escape."

"How yo' gwine ter do it?"

"Cast off the towing hawser and we'll chase her."

Down-stairs rushed Pomp in hot haste, and as soon as separated the Destroyer from the steamer Frank sent her flying.

By hard speeding he saw that he could overhaul the steamer nearest the shore before her crew could land.

Past the nearest boats they flew swiftly, when the steamer opened fire upon them with rifles and pistols.

It was impossible for the shots to penetrate the heavy steel plate with which the boat was armored, but several of them crashed through the window lights.

Paying no heed to the frantic rascals, Frank kept the Destroyer going until she drew up at the first boat.

"There's Lopez in that boat now," said Dick.

He pointed at a short, wiry man, with a bushy beard, who wore the uniform of a Paraguay general.

The arch schemer was watching the approach of the torpedo boat as calmly as if no danger menaced him.

Perfectly unmoved, he said something to his men in calm, self-possessed tones, and they changed the boat's course.

Frank followed suit.

But it was very unfortunate that he did so.

There came a sudden jar—a grating—a bump—and with violent suddenness the Destroyer came to a pause.

Astute as a fox, Lopez had lured her upon a sunken rock. A sarcastic, sneering laugh pealed from his thick, red lips as he saw the torpedo boat stop.

Before Frank and his companions recovered their wits the boat landed and her crew escaped.

"Baffled!" cried Frank, furiously.

"Arrah! Be aisy," said Barney. "There's ther rest of 'em."

"So dey am, but how we's gwine to git afloat?" asked Pomp.

Oh, I know a way," replied the inventor, reassuringly. Two of the other boats now drew near, and their crews, much emboldened by the sight of the torpedo boat handed, opened fire upon her.

The bullets flew around her like hail. Window glasses were shattered to atoms and fell jingling the floors, and dozens of bullets flew into the interior of Destroyer in dangerous proximity to our friends.

CHAPTER X.

FIGHTING THE BOATS' CREWS.

"Put on your armor and fire at them from the deck, s!"

As Frank gave this order his companions dashed down to the storeroom, clad themselves in their metal suits, and arming themselves with pneumatic repeating rifles, passed outside.

By the time they reached the deck Frank had a surprise awaiting them.

The submarine boat was afloat.

She carried water ballast.

By pumping it out, Frank lightened her.

Hence she easily floated off the rock.

Then she dashed for the nearest quarter boat.

Barney, Pomp and Dick were out on deck and began to

As soon as the explosive bullets with which the rifles were loaded began to burst upon contact with the boats, a fearful scene of carnage began.

The rebels fired back volley after volley at the deadly trio, but their bullets fell harmlessly against the metal suits worn by our friends.

They were utterly invulnerable to rifle bullets.

Upon seeing that they could not hurt the crew of the torpedo boat, while they themselves were being wounded with every shot that was returned, the rebels yelled for mercy.

"Surrender, then!" cried Frank in Portuguese, for he was a good linguist. "Surrender, or die!"

"Yes! Yes!" screamed the boatmen.

"Fling down your arms!"

"We will! We will!"

And they did.

Up to them dashed the Destroyer.

In a moment more the rascals were all taken aboard, and having been handcuffed to each other, were taken inside.

The crews of the remaining four boats paused in alarm, or they saw plainly that they had terrible foes to deal with.

At this juncture there sounded a frightful explosion.

The steamer blew up!

A slow match had been lighted in the powder magazine, and having reached the explosives the vessel was destroyed.

Her fragments flew up in the air and all around.

The sea was strewn with the debris, while all the metal parts went to the bottom.

It was the resort of desperate men.

They had realized that the steamer was doomed.

Rather than allow her to fall into the hands of their enemies, they preferred to blow her up.

In this design they succeeded well.

"Now there's no resort for the fellows in those quarter boats," grimly muttered Frank. "They can't pass us to reach land, and must fight us, if they wish to resist capture."

He sent the Destroyer rushing toward the nearest boat.

The crew fired a perfect fusillade.

It did no serious damage.

And it was suddenly interrupted.

The keen prow of the torpedo boat struck the rowboat. Crash! went the wood.

It was crushed like an egg shell.

The crew was flung into the sea.

Here they were utterly at Frank's mercy.

"Come aboard!" shouted the young inventor to them.

"You will kill us!" replied one.

"No; you shall have fair trial ashore."

This assurance encouraged them.

Every one boarded the low-setting deck.

As fast as they came aboard, the boy, the Celt and the coon secured them and locked them up with the others.

Seeing how matters were going, the rest of the boats' crews made a desperate effort to escape.

"Destroy their boats!" cried Frank.

"Hurroo!" yelled Barney, who was always in his glory when fighting. "Be heavens, they're all dead min!"

"Watch the black cyclone if yo' wanten see the boats sink," roared Pomp, as he let drive. "Lord ob lub, I'ish, yo' amn't in it wif dis yer coon. Bress mah soul, yo' see dat shot?"

"There goes one of the boats to pieces!" cried Dick, excitedly, as he kept on firing. "And hang me if a number of those dagos weren't hit, too. Never mind. Give them another."

And another round was fired.

The two remaining boats were destroyed.

Now all hands were in the water, and some were drowned.

The torpedo boat flew ahead furiously, and plunging in

among the swimmers, Frank gave them the alternative of coming aboard and submitting to arrest or having their brains blown out in the water.

Every one chose the former course.

The result of the fray proved to be successful for Frank, as he had captured three-fourths of the steamer's crew alive, although he had lost the prize vessel.

As soon as every one of the rebels were imprisoned, the three fighters on deck abandoned their armor.

A general jubilation ensued.

The boat had been stopped and Frank joined his friends.

"This isn't so bad," he remarked, delightedly. "Seventy-eight prisoners, and only one boat missed."

"It's sorry I am that we're after losin' Lopez."

"Yes, Barney; but we'll meet the rascal again."

"An de steamah!" growled Pomp, regretfully.

"Never mind, boys, Lopez is badly crippled now."

Frank took one of the prisoners out.

He designed to gain some information from the man.

Pointing a revolver at the terrified fellow's head, he said:

"Unless you truthfully answer my questions, I intend to blow your brains out—do you hear?"

"For God's sake, don't kill me, sir," whined the man.

"Then tell me where the rest of your fleet is."

"They have gone down the coast."

"Bound for your rendezvous?"

"Yes—at Lagoa do Sombrio."

"And the Brazilian ironclads?"

"Two of them were pursuing."

"What were the plans of Lopez for the future?"

"None were formed since the defeat of our bombardment."

"Why were you going to your retreat?"

"To reorganize and form a new expedition."

Frank could not gain much information from the fellow, and finally returned him to his companions.

On the following morning after mess while Pomp was at the wheel, he descried a steamer coming up the coast.

It ultimately proved to be one of the Brazilian ironclads.

She bore down upon the Destroyer, and Frank ran his boat alongside under the stars and stripes.

The commander appeared.

Frank gave him an account of what happened.

"I will put the prisoners in your hands," he said in conclusion, "and you can carry them back to Rio, for I am going on in pursuit of the rebels."

"I will gladly avail myself of your offer," replied the officer.

The prisoners were transferred aboard the frigate.

When this was done, Frank asked:

"What has become of the other ironclads?"

"One of them continued on in pursuit of the fugitives do not know what has become of the other two."

It was fair to presume that they were hunting for rebel ships yet, and Frank then parted with the officer.

Salutes were exchanged, and while the man-of-war was up the coast, the Destroyer went down.

A lookout was maintained for some sign of the missing ship, and the broken glasses were replaced by new ones.

Nothing was seen of Frank's prey.

Late in the afternoon Barney got out his fiddle and Pomp his banjo, and seating themselves on the shady side of the deck they struck up a lively tune, and enlivened the morning with songs.

But finally they struck a snag.

Pomp wanted to play a tune called the "Bran' N Coon," and Barney was equally determined to play "Alway Mind Your Sister Jennie."

Both were determined and both were obstinate.

"If you don't want to do what I say, honey, I ain't gwine to play at all!"

"Be heavens, I'll go it alone, thin!" replied Barney.

"No, sah! I ain't gwine to leabe you do it."

"We'll see!" roared Barney.

And he started in.

Bang! went the head of Pomp's banjo down on Barney's cocoanut before he had out three notes.

Instead of hurting the Celt it burst the sheepskin with a report like a pistol shot, and Pomp gave a howl of dismay.

A roar of laughter pealed from Barney's lips.

He laughed so hard that he was fairly doubled up.

Whang! went the coon's boot against the hilarious Celt's anatomy like a spile-driver, and with a wild whoop Barney was propelled forward until he landed on deck on his face.

It was Pomp's turn to laugh now.

But he was not left long in the enjoyment of his fun for there suddenly sounded an appalling shriek in the air which was instantly followed by a deafening explosion.

It was a bombshell which had been fired from somewhere along the shore at the boat, but it failed to injure her.

The negro and the Irishman instantly forgot their little diversion, and made a wild rush to get inside out of harm's way.

"An attack! An attack!" yelled Barney.

Frank was upon the alert in a moment, and peering out of the cupola window, he saw where the dangerous shot had been fired from.

CHAPTER XI.

BLOWING UP AN ENTRENCHMENT.

the shore was lined with bushes and trees, and seemed to present a solid front to the sea. This, however, was a mere delusion, for far beyond the shrubbery Frank caught sight of a ruddy fire. Intervening between the fire and the trees he detected a sparkle of water, and realized that the shrubbery grew on a sandbar lying some distance off shore. The shot had come from the bay flowing between the bar and the main, and the inventor jumped to the conclusion that his enemies were in the bay or on the main. Ordinarily their lurking place would not have been detected by crews on passing ships. It was a good refuge for people of their stamp. But Frank could see no inlet. He carefully scanned the shore with his glass. At a break in the coast line of the bar appeared. When he made up his mind that it was a concealed entrance, for there certainly must be an opening somewhere. All in!" he cried. "Close doors and windows." This was a signal of descent. "It's safer for us under water," said Dick, meaningly. "Yes. We can't see them and they see us," Frank replied. "This isn't their rendezvous." "Do you know anything about the place?" "No, sir; if there's a bay on the other side of the bar, it has never been in it," the boy replied. "Well, I intend to get in there if there's an inlet." "All ready, sir!" shouted Barney just then, down below. "Down she goes, then!" Frank exclaimed, pulling the lever; and the boat began to sink. In a few moments she was buried until the top of her cupola was flush with the surface of the water. Here Frank stopped her. When he drove her in shoreward. He was then invisible to any one who might be looking for her, and continued on until a harsh grating under the keel warned Frank that the water was shoaling. He then turned her parallel with the coast. She glided down to the southward slowly. "Where are you going to?" curiously asked Dick. "I am in search of a channel through the bar," Frank replied, as he kept his glance fastened upon the bottom. "I thought though we might not discover an inlet while on the sur-

face, as they have doubtless taken pains to conceal it, we can make no mistake once we see a channel."

Barney came in just then.

He cast a glance at one of the dials and remarked:

"Do yer moind ther little air we have in storage?"

"That's so," assented Frank. "Scarcely more than enough for an hour."

"Faith, it's smothered we'd be if we didn't refill the reservoir."

"In deep water," Frank assented, gravely. "If we were under a great water pressure and our supply of air was consumed, we would not have buoyancy enough left to reach the top."

Just then Dick exclaimed:

"There's a channel now on the starboard."

He pointed to a deep, wide trench running westward.

Frank turned the boat into it.

After a lapse of ten minutes it abruptly curved to the right.

Operating the pumps a few moments, he caused the boat to rise a few feet, until half the cupola was out of water.

Once the windows were opened above the surface, Frank glanced around.

The boat was in a long and narrow bay.

On one side were rocky bluffs, and on the other the bar covered with dense and luxuriant vegetation.

Up on the bluffs there burned a fire.

Frank leveled a glass at it, and caught sight of a large number of men intrenched among the rocks, while floating in the water at the base of the rocks was a ship at anchor.

He now saw the inlet astern of the Destroyer, and observed that it was a winding passage choked up with vegetation.

"There are several guns mounted on those heights," he remarked to his companions. "Yet despite that I'm going to drag away yonder ship and everybody aboard of her, if I find it will pay to do so."

He kept the boat going toward the vessel after submerging her, and soon reached it.

Bringing the Destroyer to a pause on the seaward side of the craft, he raised her some, and going out, climbed on the vessel's deck.

Not a soul was to be seen there.

She lay in the shadow of the rocks.

Frank approached the cabin and peered in.

It was empty.

He then strode up forward.

Going down the fore-castle companion, he glanced around and discovered that this place, too, was vacant.

In a word, the ship was deserted.

Satisfied of this, Frank changed his plans.

As the vessel was heavily armed, he felt confident that she was one of the rebel ships.

The name he saw was La Stella.

Returning aboard the Destroyer, he mentioned the name to Dick.

"Isn't she one of Lopez's vessels?" he asked.

"Why, yes; she's the very one I was a captive on," the boy replied.

"You don't say so! Well, as she's deserted, I'm going to destroy her."

"Look out for the fellows over our heads, sir."

"One shot will suffice to put her out of existence. Here, take the wheel, Pomp, till I heave her a shot."

"My Lord! Whar yo' gwine ter stan', honey?"

"You might hold her off in the middle of the bay."

"Yassah," replied Pomp. "I gib yo' seventy yards range."

Frank went below and loaded the gun.

By the time this was done, Pomp had the boat off at the range in question and sent her to the top.

The torpedo tube was yet far beneath the surface, but Frank easily changed its elevation to an angle suited to firing about where he wished the projectile to hit.

No sooner was the vessel on top when the troops and marines up on the bluff saw her.

They gave a yell and the gunners rushed to their ordnance and began to get it ready for use.

Frank fired the shot.

The projectile curved upward.

Flying from the surface of the bay, it flew at the ship.

The vessel was hit abaft of the port cathead, and a roar pealed out that was deafening.

The ship was blown to fragments.

Its destruction caused the men on the bluffs to pause in horror of the destructive torpedo boat.

Frank loaded and fired a second shot.

This projectile was aimed to strike some distance above the place where the ship laid.

It hit the rocks just below the spot where the entrenchment was.

A mass of broken stone and pulverized dirt flew up in the air from the shot, and a shout came from the horrified men that could have been heard a great distance.

Frank went up on deck.

He saw that many of the rebels had been injured.

The rest were running away among the rocks in the wildest disorder, with no further thoughts of hostility.

"None of them will ever trouble me again," he muttered.

"Gwine fo' ter gib 'em anudder, Marse Frank?"

Pomp.

"It isn't necessary. Send her out to sea."

"Under de watah, sah?"

"No. Keep her on top, Pomp."

"Yes, sah."

And so saying, the coon steered the Destroyer toward the inlet.

She soon reached it, and pushing the tree branches forced her way out to the open ocean.

Here she sped away to the southward.

Night fell upon the sea.

Pomp prepared supper, and when it was concluded he went out on deck with Barney and glanced at the sky.

It was very cloudy.

A sudden flash of light in the distance caught the attention.

"Hov we lightnin' bugs on the say?" he asked.

"Why, no," said Frank, with a smile.

"Shure an' there goes another wan."

"To what are you alluding, Barney?"

"Luck beyant."

He pointed ahead, and a moment afterward the invader caught a glimpse of the flashing spark of light in the gloom.

He leaned forward in a listening attitude.

A faint report reached his ears.

"A shot!" he exclaimed.

"What! Is it shootin' I see?"

"Yes. There's trouble ahead there, Barney."

"A ruction! Hurroo! Bedad, it's a hand I'll be at takin' in it."

"Hey, Dick, put on speed there!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" returned the young sailor.

He drove the Destroyer at the top of her speed, and as she swiftly bore down upon the flashing lights they heard the repeated roar of guns.

Presently they saw what was transpiring.

A large ship was attacked by two other vessels.

The big fellow carried the American flag, and as Dick caught a good view of the other two, he exclaimed:

"Why, they are two of Lopez's boats, Mr. Reade."

"And they are engaged in a piratical outrage that shall not go unpunished!" ringingly cried Frank.

The Destroyer rushed swiftly toward the combat, and our friends saw that the Yankees were gallantly defending themselves.

CHAPTER XII.

FIGHTING WITH GUNS.

he American ship had lost her mainmast, the spars on foremast had been blown away, and the shots fired by rebels were badly pounding her hull.

he had no guns aboard, but her gallant crew were armed a rifles and pistols, and while crouching behind the bul- ts, were firing volley after volley at their aggressors.

the midst of the fray the Destroyer rushed up.

Barney and Dick manned the gun, and Frank stood be- the con in the wheel-house.

ut shot the dazzling searchlight upon the scene, and nk shouted down the tube to the Irishman:

Dead ahead, Barney, five hundred yards. Fire quick!"

n instant afterward a projectile flew from the gun.

t struck the ship amidships.

ll the works above the scuppers were torn away, and htful havoc was created among the rascals who swarmed the ship.

wild cheer pealed from the Yankee crew.

The crew of the second ship now directed their guns at Destroyer, and a broadside was fired.

Several of the shots struck the torpedo boat at an angle.

One drove in her plates of steel, forming a hollow in the ; another dug a piece out of her stern, leaving a silvery te broad scrape, and the third tore part of the railing off deck-house.

Fortunately, however, her hull was not opened to let in water, and Frank screamed down the tube:

Barney, load the gun again!"

Then he swung the boat around, and when her bow was ented towards the ship, he stopped and steadied her.

The distance he mentally calculated to be a quarter of a

e. Barney elevated the angle of the gun to carry that dis- ce.

When he fired the shot flew over the ship.

Frank did not lose a moment, but steered the Destroyer ight toward the vessel from which the shots had come.

n a few minutes he had the torpedo boat around at the n of the ship, where her broadside guns could do no in- , and running up to within a cable's length, he cried:

Level and fire, Barney!"

he shot was discharged, and it struck the ship's keel.

When the explosion came, the vessel was lifted from water, her frame torn asunder.

Settling in the water again, she filled and sank.

Many of her crew were left struggling in the water, but Frank did not attempt to pick them up.

He sent the boat flying toward the other vessel.

As they passed the American ship, he shouted:

"Can you manage your craft?"

"Yes," replied the skipper. "She will easily float."

"Then make prisoners of the men in the water."

And on went the Destroyer after the remaining boat.

Overwhelmed with fear of our friends, the crew had made haste to sail away, thinking they could escape thus.

But they did not know how fast the torpedo boat could travel.

When they saw her swiftly bearing down upon them, they manned a swivel gun and fired back a shot at her.

It crashed through the cupola window.

For an instant Frank and Pomp thought they were gone, as it flew furiously between their heads, and showered a mass of splintered wood and broken glass all over them.

But it missed them, struck the wall in back, tore a hole through, and finally fell into the sea astern.

"Hey, Barney, I'll run chock-a-block with them!"

"Shure, I'm almost ready, me laddy-buck."

Along swept the Destroyer like a race horse.

Presently she hove up to the ship, the gunner on which had his swivel in readiness for a second shot.

"Fire!"

The torpedo struck the vessel almost as soon as it left the tube.

Not much of the ship or crew was left in less than a minute afterward, for the remains littered the sea.

It was a dangerous experiment, however, for it caused the torpedo boat to recoil with such a terrible shock that her gear was thrown out of order, and her crew knocked down.

A rain of debris from the destroyed vessel came down upon her, banging her all over, and she would have been seriously injured had not her steel plates been so thick and strong.

Frank scrambled to his feet and looked out.

"She's gone!" he exclaimed.

Barney and Dick came rushing up-stairs, and upon seeing how matters stood, their excitement abated.

Pomp had gone out to see how the Destroyer had stood it.

He soon returned to the interior, and going below, adjusted the gear.

"Ain't eben got a scratch!" he declared. "I've fixed the machinery."

"Let's return to the ship yonder," said Frank.

The vessel he indicated had gone on slowly with what

little canvas she could carry, and reached the swimming men.

Every one of them had been picked up.

The Destroyer soon reached the ship.

Flashing her searchlight across her deck, Frank observed that the crew was busy hanging their prisoners.

"Stop stringing up those men!" shouted Frank. "They are my prisoners."

"That's so. But we will save you the trouble of hanging them."

"You needn't trouble yourself to do that. I'll board you."

The Destroyer ran alongside of the ship, and Frank made his way to her deck, where he was met by the captain.

Grasping the inventor's hand and heartily shaking it, the old fellow began to pour out a torrent of thanks for what had been done for them.

"I want no thanks," said Frank. "I am working my torpedo under a letter of marque from the United States Government in the interest of American seamen and citizens who are jeopardized by these Brazilian rebels."

"All the same, we are mighty grateful."

"You can show your respect, then, if you do as I say."

"I'll do anything reasonable you may ask."

"Confine your prisoners below, and carry them to Rio. There put them in the hands of the authorities with an account of their villainy. I'll warrant you they will get their just deserts. Will you do this?"

"Yes—of course I will."

Frank then left the ship.

Once more aboard the Destroyer, he called his companions together, and they began operations at once.

The work lasted all night.

But when daylight came the torpedo boat was put in good, serviceable condition, and continued on her way.

Toward nightfall they reached the vicinage of the retreat of the rebels, and proceeded more carefully.

Dick finally pointed out a small river.

"Our course lies up that stream, sir," said he to Frank. "If you wish to reach the rendezvous ascend that river one mile and you'll find yourself in a lake. Upon the borders of that place is the rebels' stronghold! If they are here, it's as much as our lives are worth to venture up that stream, for it is guarded by batteries of artillery from the ocean to the lake."

"Then we will go up under the water," promptly said Frank.

He thereupon submerged the Destroyer, and heading her for the mouth of the dangerous river, he sent her into it.

In a moment more they were speeding for the stronghold.

CHAPTER XIII.

THROUGH THE DANGEROUS RIVER.

The Destroyer was submerged to a depth of five feet; the bottom of the river was but twenty feet below her.

Half the distance to the lake was traversed, when Frank caught sight of a floating object ahead looking like a

"That's queer," he commented. "Why don't they float on top?"

"Maybe the anchor cable was short, and the tide high and covered it," suggested Dick, practically.

"Perhaps. Then again see there—a number of wrecks cross our course from one side of the river to the other. They are only some wreckage, or were they put there to hinder the advance of vessels up the stream?"

"I see them; but never heard of them before, sir."

"Well, I'm going to smash through them."

In order to make sure of cutting the lines, he led the boat to within a few feet of the bottom.

Then he drove her ahead.

She struck the line with a heavy shock.

It parted suddenly and a terrific explosion followed.

The buoy had burst to pieces above the boat.

In a word, it was a submarine torpedo.

The line severed by the Destroyer was put there broken, so that the torpedo would burst if an enemy ascended the river.

Most of the force of the explosion went upward, for there was less water pressure above than below the shell.

Consequently the Destroyer escaped being blown to pieces.

Large pieces of flying iron struck her metal plates, the force of gun-shots, and made her stagger.

One piece pierced the bull's-eye of her searchlight, and rendered the instrument unfit for use.

Another missile, however, caused them a most serious injury.

It smashed one of the windows, and the water rushed in. Frank had already raised the boat.

"Barney, put in a new glass—quick!" he shouted.

As soon as the aperture was above the river, no water came in, and Barney got a new glass to put in.

Both banks of the river were lined with armed men, and others were running from all directions to join them.

A cry of amazement escaped them when they saw the Destroyer thus suddenly come up from under the river.

They now realized what it was that exploded one of the torpedoes they had sunk in the stream.

As soon as they saw the boat they knew what she was, for Lopez and the rest of the boat's crew who had escaped ashore when their steamer was destroyed had notified them about this boat.

Recovering from their surprise they began to fire at the torpedo boat, and the bullets rattled all over her.

"Close the shutters!" shouted Frank.

He feared the rifle bullets might pierce the other glasses.

Dick and Pomp hastily went from window to window, and drew the metal screens over them.

Feeling more secure now, Frank started the Destroyer up the river, but she had not gone far when he beheld a line of stone walls on each embankment.

Entrenched behind these breastworks were a number of guns, to which the crowd was rushing.

Frank stopped the boat.

He left the boat in the darky's charge, and dove down below.

The gun was already loaded, and he had only to get the range to fire a shot at the breastworks.

The scene that followed was frightful.

Pomp changed the position of the boat.

Again the pneumatic gun sent its destructive missile, and although it missed its mark, it landed among the trees back of the wall, and destroyed many of the men.

These terrible shots put the crowd to flight.

By this time Barney had the window repaired, and when Pomp called down that the rebels fled, Frank came upstairs.

Having accomplished his purpose and joined his friends, he sent the boat under the water again.

Ahead she glided, and a sharp lookout was kept by the use of the searchlight for more torpedoes.

Presently a similar arrangement was seen.

Frank stopped the Destroyer at a safe distance from it.

"Barney, drive a shot ahead to explode that thing," he said.

Barney sent a shot bowling ahead through the water, and it tore through the lines and burst.

The torpedo was exploded by the bursting of the projectile, and as the way to the lake was now opened, the boat flew ahead once more and left the river.

Frank raised the boat to the surface and glanced around.

To his surprise he found her in the midst of a circle of armed ships that were swarming with men.

Frank submerged the boat again, as he spoke, and sent her flying toward the nearest ship.

Here he brought her to a pause beneath its hull.

And there he remained for fully half an hour.

Frank went down below with Barney.

A large coil of insulated copper wire was procured, and a dozen or more bombs of the kind with cup suckers and binding-posts, after which they put on their diving suits.

"I'll blow up a number of the vessels together!" said Frank.

He gave the coon some instructions, and then he and Barney went out on deck with the implements.

One of the bombs was fastened to the ship, and the wire was bound to it, after which the boat was driven to the next vessel, another bomb secured, and the wire from the first bomb was bound to it.

In this manner a series of eleven of the ships were pinned together, after which Frank took the remaining end of the wire to the binding-post on the deck-house.

Having secured it he motioned to Pomp.

Just as the coon was about to switch the electric current into the wire, there came a tug at it.

The ships had begun to move away.

The wire parted between them somewhere.

Nothing could be done to prevent it, and in this manner some of the vessels escaped annihilation.

When the explosion came, several of them were blown up.

CHAPTER XIV.

LOST IN THE FOG.

The twilight was deepening into the pall of night, and two big ironclads that came from Rio, attracted by the sound of the explosions, came steaming up the river.

In ten minutes they reached the lake, and their commanders observed how matters stood.

They manned their guns, and starting straight across the lake, one in advance of the other, they opened broadsides upon the rebels' vessels, and battered several of them to pieces.

As quickly as possible, the ships' crews retaliated, and a terrible conflict ensued between them.

The rebels were caught in a trap.

It was impossible to maneuver their ships in the little lake to any advantage, and they therefore made a desperate effort to escape to the open sea.

There were four of them, all large and commodious.

Into them the prisoners were quickly loaded, and then each of our friends took charge of a boat and rowed away.

They had not gone fifty yards from the Vera Cruz when she half arose from the water and then plunged down.

She was swallowed up by the sea forever.

"Gone!" Frank exclaimed.

They headed the boats for the shore, and would have made a landing had not Barney suddenly cried:

"Sail ho! Sail ho!"

"Where away?" hastily asked Frank.

"Ter ther north."

"It's a steamer!"

He watched the oncoming vessel intently, half afraid that it might be another of Lopez's boats.

He was soon undeceived, however, for the vessel finally resolved itself into one of Dom Pedro's ironclads.

It caused our friends the most intense delight.

They rowed toward it, and finally met the big cruiser.

Having been taken aboard with the prisoners, Frank and his companions explained what had befallen them.

The commander was delighted at having Lopez and so many of the rebels in his power.

He told Frank that he would carry them to Rio.

Accordingly the ironclad was turned northward.

In due course of time she reached the capital.

The news of Frank's capture spread like wildfire, and when our friends went ashore they were given a grand ovation.

The prisoners were lodged in jail.

An invitation came from the emperor to Frank and his companions to call at the palace.

They accepted it, and met the American consul there.

Here they were honored as few foreigners are.

"You have been the means of breaking the insurrection, sir," said Dom Pedro to Frank. "With the capture of Lopez the rest of the rebels have become discouraged. Dispatches from the interior apprise me that the war is at an end."

"I am glad to hear it," said Frank.

"We have nothing further to apprehend here now," the American consul added. "Mr. Reade, when you return to the United States, I shall take pleasure in advising our war department of the valor you have shown in the defense of our interests in these waters."

"My work was done with the sanction of our government," Frank replied, "but upon my part it was purely voluntary. I am therefore amenable to no one."

This was a phase of the case of which every one was ignorant.

Our friends remained in Brazil only long enough to assure themselves that hostilities had indeed ceased.

They then left for New York in an outward bound steamer.

Four days after they departed Lopez escaped from jail, succeeded in regaining his own country, and ultimately died.

His companions in treason suffered the penalty of their crimes.

Frank and his companions reached New York in due season, and a report was made to the government.

A large reward had been appropriated for the inventor by the government, to be paid in case he was successful.

As the news of his exploits had preceded him, the money was promptly sent to Frank.

But he, Barney and Pomp, were very wealthy.

The sum they gained was a mere bagatelle to them.

They promptly gave it all to Dick Davit, the poor sailor boy, and he suddenly found himself enriched.

Suffice it to say that the boy embarked in business, and was so successful that he became a wealthy man.

Frank and his two friends returned to Readestown.

Here they were met with every demonstration of joy, and were soon installed in their old quarters.

Their voyage had been perfectly satisfactory in every sense, but they deeply regretted the loss of the Destroyer.

As a substitute for her Frank began to plan out another invention a short time after his return.

It eventually proved to be a most wonderful invention, and fairly eclipsed anything he had ever built in the past.

We have another story in readiness about the young inventor's thrilling adventures in the new marvel, in company with Barney and Pomp.

Therefore we will part with them for awhile.

THE END.

Read "FIGHTING THE SLAVE HUNTERS; OR, FRANK READE, JR., IN CENTRAL AFRICA," which will be the next number (12) of the "Frank Reade Weekly."

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